Honorable Judge Denise Cote
United States District Court
Southern District of New York
500 Pearl Street
New York, NY 10007

Dakar, July 24, 2017

RE: Mahmoud Thiam

Dear Juge Cote,

My name is Fatim Sow Thiam. I have been married to Mahmoud Thiam for twenty three years. Together, we have raised three daughters, ages 19, 17 and 14. They have been a great source of joy and pride for both of us as we watch them take steps into the world. Originally from Senegal, I came to the United States to pursue my education. I hold a Masters Degree in Biochemical Engineering from Cornell University and a MBA from Harvard University. I was trained to return home to help run the family business, a Dairy Products manufacturing facility my father, himself an engineer, created and ran for twenty five years. This did not come to bear as the business was shut down as the result of a government-orchestrated plot to bring him down. My equally qualified siblings and I ended up staying abroad, despite our original intentions to return and serve our country of origin. I worked for a series of leading Food and Consumer Product companies in the US before starting my own company in 2003, which afforded me the flexibility to raise a family while my husband was traveling extensively for business.

The first thing that struck me when I met my future husband is his boundless generosity. Over the years this has continued to define his interactions with me, our children, family members, friends and even colleagues. Countless examples, small and large, known and unknown abound: help with a relative's medical bill or school tuition, a car for a colleague or even a stranger who needs it to get to work and earn a living, even at times when he himself was in a precarious financial situation, which happened quite often. His generosity, well known by many people, to the point that some abused it, stemmed from a deep-seated compassion for the plight of people in distress, especially women and children, most likely because he could relate to what deep distress meant from the youngest age.

This leads me to the traumatic events that marked his early childhood starting with the imprisonment of his father, a brilliant economist, followed by torture in a concentration camp, death by hanging from the now infamous bridge "Pont des Pendus" along with hundreds or thousands of fellow educated Guineans, mostly Fulani, and mass burial in an undisclosed location. As a result, Mahmoud and his sisters were separated and smuggled out of the country, to be raised by friends and family. Their mother stayed behind hoping for her beloved husband's release and relocated to the countryside were she worked tirelessly as a nurse and midwife. She was reunited with her children fifteen years later after the death of the dictator, but only briefly, as Guinea could not offer them adequate conditions to pursue their education. These horrific acts wiped out a whole generation of promising, educated young talent, mostly from the prosperous and entrepreneurial Fulani tribe, and triggered a brain exodus that more than forty years later continues to cripple the Guinean economy, even more so today as the ideological heirs of the original dictator have returned to power and are still hell bent on bringing down children of the Fulani intellectuals that were massacred in the seventies.

Many of the children of that lost generation have struggled all their lives to cope with this trauma. I have always marveled at how Mahmoud seemed to have escaped that fate, as evidenced by his unflappable good nature, his steadfast kindness, his steady demeanor, his drive to succeed, his solid and professional academic achievements and his phenomenal social skills. I now know that I was fooled by a carefully constructed mask that hides deeply buried emotional wounds, chronic muscle and foot pain, anxiety, insomnia, severe digestive irritability, but also hidden fears and undisciplined financial behavior. While he has been able to keep a tight lid on these silent issues by sheer will, the entire edifice is now showing signs of strain, which leads us to the very painful situation of this detention and conviction.

Mahmoud embodies the spirit of compassion, despite the horror that clouded his early childhood. Everyone who has come in contact with him can attest to that, and this has served him greatly throughout his life as people from all walks of life have reciprocated. Yet, serious and repeated errors of judgement have led him to make careless and fatal mistakes. It is my absolute conviction that his troubled beginnings have played a key role in the sorry state of his affairs. That combined with the exceptionally bizarre climate that prevailed during the tenure of the military junta in Guinea at that time, contributed to his failure to carefully assess all of the numerous pitfalls of the situation he was facing as Minister of Mines. It is impossible to encapsulate in a few words the dysfunctional state of affairs that prevailed in Guinea at that time, the latent danger, the systemic incompetence, the chaos and unpredictability that the military regime seemed to thrive on, the assassination attempt on the military leader, the deadly stadium tragedy that left hundreds dead, and last but not least the heavy toll of international sanctions on a country already on its knees. Danger was lurking from inside, but also from outside. There was a time when Mahmoud was so fearful for his life that, in addition to the military body guard that was assigned to him, he felt the need to carry a weapon because he had received veiled death threats from a Russian mining company he took head on as Minister to force them into auditing their activities and unlock hundreds of millions of dollars of back taxes due to the Guinean treasury. While there is no doubt in my mind that the two-year Guinean episode took a toll on his health, both physical and mental, he managed to slowly recover after he returned to the US and eased back into the family routine, thanks to his exceptional resilience and survival instinct.

Eight months of detention have forced him to reflect on all this for the first time, free of distractions. Distraction had been his main coping mechanism and once it was taken away, it forced him to squarely confront his old demons. He has been writing prolifically in detention and this has started a sorely needed healing and reflecting process. While the healing will take time, and professional help may aid, I am absolutely convinced that the past months in detention and the reflection that ensued will allow him to finally grapple with his inconsistencies, his distracted mind, bring order to his chaotic affairs, and finally help him capitalize on his exceptional capacity for vision, problem solving, consensus building and strategic thinking, all sorely needed in his community.

Dear Judge Cote, I implore you to consider all this when you decide on Mahmoud's sentencing. A good man at his core, a fantastic but flawed human being, an exceptional father, son, brother, husband, friend, colleague, contributor to his community. His arrest has already had a crippling effect on the children, their ability to go to college, the family, our aging parents. His mother, already in poor health, is declining fast, as the specter of detention is re inviting itself in her life. My father, who has adopted Mahmoud like his own son, has not been able to stomach the blow of his arrest, which came after a series of devastating personal losses - the sudden death of my younger brother in the prime of his life, the loss of his business. He passed away earlier this month. Mahmoud is still a pillar of our very large family, on his side and on mine, because of his undivided availability, support and leadership. Please consider the devastating loss to us all, our family, our community, the squashed potential for his future and that of our three brilliant daughters.

In gratitude,

Fatim Sow Thiam

Honorable Judge Denise Cote
District Court
Southern District of New York
500 Pearl Street
New York, NY 10007

[illegible]

Re: Mahmoud Thiam

[illegible] Judge Cote

[illegible] with great surprise and [illegible] that I learned about the [illegible] [illegible] against [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] known Mahmoud since [illegible] [illegible] in Togo. I have [illegible] [illegible] knowledge of [illegible] [illegible] service [illegible]. The [illegible] transparency. I demand the [illegible]

A few years ago, Mahmoud [illegible] [illegible], contrarily to the rest [illegible] development of his country [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] and rampant corruption in [illegible] [illegible]

Mahmoud Thiam is the [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible], with a high sense of family [illegible] [illegible] Mahmoud's [illegible] [illegible]

I have always had great admiration and respect [illegible] who, despite the childhood trauma [illegible] Mahmoud is a good father, devoted husband [illegible] [illegible] He is reliable, rigorous [illegible] the people of his country of origin.

I am addressing you as a mother and [illegible] to implore your leniency. He [illegible] inappropriate decisions. Other people should [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]. The lesson is [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

His father died in Sekou Toure's gallows. Thanks [illegible] sought to deserve his family's trust and pushed himself [illegible] Mahmoud is first of all a victim of a brutal system set up in Guinea fifty years ago [illegible] still active, but under more hidden forms.

I humbly acknowledge that justice must be [illegible] However, I implore your [illegible] father's presence, something he was denied after [illegible] political reasons.

I thank you for your time and [illegible] decision you will make and [illegible]

[signature]

[illegible]

Fatoumata Thiam
Quartier kipe
Ratoma, Conakry
Guinea

Conakry July 25th, 2017

To: To Honorable judge Denise Cote
United States District Court Southern
District of New York 500 Pearl Street
New York, NY 10007

Subject **Mahmoud Thiam case**

Dear Judge Cote,

My name is Fatouma Thiam, I have been working in the humanitarian domain for more than half of my career. My main focuses are Community Development and Communication for behavioral change.

I am one of Mahmoud Thiam's sisters. I will be writing this letter on behalf of myself and my mother (Fadima Thiam), who is not well and has been devastated by this situation.

Mahmoud and I were separated at very young age, few years after our father was killed by a dictatorial regime in Guinea in the early 70s. Our dad and many of our closest uncles were tortured and killed in the Boiro Camp in Guinea, a horrible jail where about 50 000 people were killed by Sekou Toure's regime.

Because education was very poor in Guinea, our mother decided to send us other to close family members' (abroad) to give us better chances to study. That was a huge sacrifice for a 25 years woman whose husband was just killed without fair judgment in a communist system.
After we separated at that early age, I met Mahmoud again for the first time when I was about 14 years old in Brussels at my uncle and auntie's house (the Soumaré family. We barely knew each other.
Mahmoud is from a very large and respected family. We are honest and hard working people. We have high values for family, close and very supportive to each other. Mahmoud's arrest was a big shock to all of us and it got us even closer.

When Mahmoud was proposed the position of minister in Guinea, I was afraid and against it because I knew he did not know the country or the people well enough to survive in it. But for our mother, who did not raise his only son, this was an opportunity to make up for all these lost years and spend some quality time with him,

so she did not discourage him from coming. When I asked him why he was making such a mistake to leave his peasant life in NY, his family he so dearly loved to come back to Guinea, work in a complex system with people he did not know, he told me he needed to help his native country.........
I got a chance to really know Mahmoud when he was in Guinea and we got very close. He is a very kind human being ready to assist anyone who would ask him for a favor. I discovered some of his actions only after his arrest, people started coming to me and telling me they are all praying for his release. He helped a lot of people during his stay in Guinea (for medical surgery, kids support, hadj or other matters that I don't even know about myself). Some of these actions went through me or our mother (who is some type of mother Theresa, always helping others). When he came up with the idea of the bursaries for poor brilliant kids, we both helped him manage the kids' departure to Malaysia. He had a friend who owned a university in Malaysia and proposed to offer Education for brilliants kids from poor families in some developing countries. Mahmoud managed to obtain 15 bursaries for Guineans kids in the program; some of these bursaries targeted the descendants of our Non Profit Association (Camp Boiro foundation) in memory of our fathers killed in the Boiro Camp, others were just brilliant kids who needed assistance. Most of these kids have graduated today and can support their families thanks to Mahmoud's good action. We are very proud of them and we hope Mahmoud will be out soon to continue such good actions.

I personally do not know much about big money, but I was very surprised about the allegations against Mahmoud. It is so painful for all our mothers' victims of the Boiro Camp to see their son in a situation similar to his father and uncles. Whether part of this it is true or not, Mahmoud is a brilliant young man, who got trapped in a crazy system that was totally unfamiliar to him, with people he did not know...
Whether part of these allegations are true or not, for the sake of a 74 years old woman with bad health conditions, for the sake of Mahmoud's teenage girls and wife, please give him the chance to continue his good actions as he understood his mistakes.
Please consider the fact that he was accused for corruption, not money laundry while making your decision. He is a very good man who was in the wrong place at the wrong time and really wanted to help his native country. We miss him very much and our mother's health is really not good.

Best regards

Fatoumata Thiam

July 25, 2017

Honorable Judge Denise Cote
United States District Court of New York
500 Pearl Street, New York, NY 10097
USA

Dear Judge Cote,

RE: DEFENDANT MAHMOUD THIAM

My name is Khadiatou Soumaré. I am 49 years old, married and have two children. I am an IT consultant and a cousin of the defendant Mahmoud Thiam: Our mother are sisters. Mahmoud was entrusted to my parents when his father was murdered by the first president of Guinea, Sekou Touré. Mahmoud came to live with us at the age of six, I was four.
He has been since a big brother to me. During my studies, he supported and coached me and my little brothers.
We shared everything until he left for the United States for his university studies. When he got married he chose me as witness. Mahmoud has always been a great support for the family and for anyone who solicited his help. He is of great kindness and unlimited generosity.
We have been educated with a great sense of morality and integrity inherited from our late grandfather who we cannot dishonour. Reason why I was shocked to learn the arrest of Mahmoud and even more the charges. Mahmoud sacrificed his family, his career, his comfort to go and serve his country and improve the daily life of his Guinean fellow citizens. It is very hard to see that this has only brought him problems, despite the fact that he has nevertheless succeeded in relieving some people and taking action (such as the creation of the community train). His detention is a terrible ordeal for his wife, his children and us his family. It has awakened the bad memories of the misdeeds of the dictatorship that have done so much harm to our family and our country. Mahmoud had gone to the United States to live the American dream, a dream that seems to end in a nightmare. Judge Cote, I implore here your leniency. Certainly everything is in the hands of God, but you are his arm. I implore your leniency for a quick release of the one I consider my brother.

Thank you for considering this request for leniency.

Yours truly,
Khadiatou Soumaré

July 25, 2017

Honorable Judge Denise Cote
United States District Court of New York
500 Pearl Street, New York, NY 10097
USA

Dear Judge Cote,

RE: DEFENDANT MAHMOUD THIAM

My name is Zenab Thiam, spouse Soumaré, 72 years old. I am the aunt of Mahmoud Thiam, his mother's younger sister. Following the detention of Mahmoud's father, as a political prisoner in the prisons of the late Ahmed SekouTouré -1st President of the Republic of Guinea - my sister has entrusted Mahmoud's custody to my husband and myself, he was then 6 years old . Mahmoud, our children's cousin, has been a great model brother to them for all the years they have lived together. During all the years of education of Mahmoud with us, we have never had to resolve complaints against him. It was after his High School Baccalauréat that Mahmoud went to the USA for his university studies. Mahmoud is a great family support. My husband and I were surprised and saddened when we learned of his arrest. His prolonged detention would be very burdensome for his family. Consequently, I have the honor to solicit your kindness and leniency towards Mahmoud Thiam.

Thank you for considering this request for leniency.

Yours truly,
Zenab Thiam

Kade Thiam Diop
735 Simon Ive Drive
Lawrenceville GA 30045

July 25th 2017

Honorable judge Denise Cote
United States District Court Southern of New York
500 Pearl Street New York, NY 10007

Honorable Judge Cote:

My name is Kade Thiam Diop and I am a cousin of Mahmoud Thiam, and I have known him pretty much all my life. I live near Atlanta Georgia I am married have a wonderful stepdaughter who graduated from college last year and an 8 year old little boy who is currently attending a dual language immersion program at his school (French and English).
I have a degree in Corporate and Administrative Management with a minor in accounting that I earned in France where I grew up. I work for Limited Brands, Inc. and more precisely Bath and Body Works where I have been in management for the past 15 years.

I am writing to urge leniency in the sentencing of Mahmoud Thiam who I considered as the big brother I never had. Just to give you a little insight in our culture your first cousins are first and foremost considered to be your brothers or sisters.
I am and have always been very close to him and he is always someone I look up to when I need advice. He has always been there for me helped me and supported me so many times when I needed it.
My son has been having a hard time understanding why he can't see his uncle when he goes to New York or why he can't speak to him on the phone the way he used to.
I am aware of the crimes he has been accused of committing but it is very hard for me to wrap my head around them as they really don't reflect the Mahmoud I know.
I can say with total confidence that Mahmoud Thiam has always been there for his family, his friends and his community by lending a hand to whoever needed one, by guiding the youth around him and more importantly by his philanthropic actions.
I can confirm that Mahmoud Thiam has been reliable, trustworthy, and responsible in all the time I have known him. I just hope that he gets the opportunity for a second chance because he has never been accused of any wrongdoing prior to this case.
I understand that he may have made a bad judgment call however he has always been known for his positive influence on his family and friends.
I also know that this situation has taken a tool on his dear wife and wonderful daughters, they have been so strong and humble through this ordeal and I pray that you will allow them to be reunited as a family very soon.

Sincerely,

Kade Thiam Diop

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